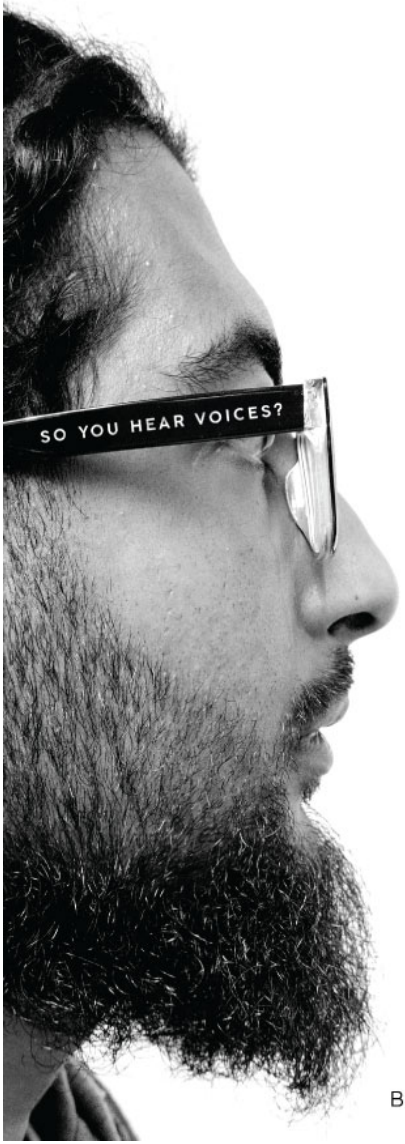
THE BLINK



BY MOHAMMED CHADILI

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CHAPTER 1
THE STARE

There it is again, that look.... That look like she's trying to tell me something but can't get the words to say it. I've been dealing with the look my whole life, I'd gotten kinda used to it by now but mainly from strangers, just not from her, just not on the other side.

I'm sorry that was rude, you didn't come here to hear about my love life, you came here for... Actually what did you come here for? And do me a favour, don't stare. You know what I mean, if you're visualising a face while reading this it's probably not mine and your mind has been hacked by the illuminati, so don't stare either way or is that just my skitzo talking... oh man, my psychiatrist said I shouldn't talk about the third eye. That's 3 more weeks in the psych ward if they find out. I should count myself lucky, it should have been 3 more months but I'm such a regular at the nut houses they let me off easy.

Before I get "distracted" again, let me properly introduce myself, my name is Adonis Love, and you're staring again. I'm sorry, I'm assuming, my old teacher used to say that you shouldn't assume, he had a dirty joke that went with why I shouldn't assume but I wanna keep this book PG 13. That's him in the background, telling me to stay focussed and oh, I don't mean in the background like I live with my teacher or anything, no that would be gross, yuck! I mean in the background like in the back of my mind, you see,

I hear voices....

The meds kind of dim them out and push them to the back of my mind where I can ignore them, but I don't have complete control, did I tell you that I'm ADHD too?

Yes let's continue, my birthday is towards the end of July, I'm a 23 year old male and I live in South Africa, Johannesburg to be exact, in a 2 bedroom flat in the heart of the crime district with my mother, Bibi, my older sister, Maliki, and my sister's 6 year old little girl, Aurora, who I've helped raise as my own. Oh yes, and our cat, Spotty.

My grandmother tells me that I'm handsome, other people tell me that I have Nuur(meaning light, in Arabic), on my face. You see, I grew up Muslim and we believe that light appears around a person, on their face especially, when that person follows the straight path, kinda scary when you look in the mirror and your face looks like a glow-stick, kinda beautiful too... recently I've been having some trouble with my faith yet the light stays, makes me wonder if they lied about which religion the light belongs to.

Was I going to go the scenic route and turn Christian? No my valued reader, I was going pagan. What's Pagan? I don't hear you asking, it's believing in the old gods, something about those Myths just resonate with me, it explains the world in a way that gives this world reason. My mom is 60 years old and has long dark hair with streaks of gray that started creeping in around her 50's but which now dominates most of her head, she's brown like me, she's short, she's a staunch Muslim and she doesn't have a single wrinkle.

My sister is about 5 years older than me. She's tall too but just a little bit shorter than me, she has thin, curly, dark hair, she's fair-skinned like our father, she has big black eyes and we look 2 exactly alike even though we're years apart.

My niece, Aurora, is the most perfect creature that I've ever

come across, inside and out. She's the average height for her age, her mouth is filled with rotting teeth from too much sweets, she has fair skin like her mother, she has black, curly, thick hair that's identical to mine (I have long hair), she has these big, confused eyes that are brown in the sun and dark-brown in the dark and the sweetest yet naughtiest smile you'll ever see. I love it.

Our cat, Spotty, is disabled. When she was a kitten, she had the sniffles so we took her to the vet He gave her an injection in the back of her neck and she let out a weird meow, my fears were only deepened when the vet put her back into her cat carrier and the next thing I knew she was huddled up in the back corner of the thing. My mom paid the vet and we left. Only when we got home did the other shoe drop. I took Spotty out of her cat carrier and put her back with the other kittens.

As soon as I let go of Spotty she fell to the floor. I can still hear her tiny head go "thump" as it hit the floor, watching her squirm around with her head looking as though it were stuck to the floor while her body moved in odd directions. I screamed for my mom, when she saw Spotty on the floor like that, my mom screamed, she thought that Spotty was dying." She's not dead," I said, "I think that she just can't crawl any more.". "Which is worse.", Bibi said. Spotty is the only cat we kept once we moved to our flat.

Our flat isn't much. It's two bedrooms, one small shower, one even smaller toilet, a kitchen and a room in the centre of it all that we use as the dining room, the lounge and Aurora's play room, I sleep on the couch. It's on the second floor. My grandmother said that she prayed for us to get a flat on the second floor because when they rob flats they usually don't get to the second floor, it makes carrying the groceries up the stairs

a mission though.

The year is 2022, Russia just launched it's attack on the Ukraine. Over the past few years, I've been bouncing around between mental institutes to rehabs to under-paid jobs, but we'll get around to that later. Yes, I still don't know what you want and well... I don't even know what I want... I guess I'll start by continuing, by that I mean I'm going to carry on telling you about the stare. For as long as I can remember, weird things have been happening to me, or at least, around me. On the list is the stare. After years of trying to fully understand the stare, I've decided the best way to analyse the stare is to analyse the things that happen before the stare.

Before the stare, something either really good or really bad happens in my head. I've figured out a pattern, it's usually something that proves the existence of an other side, a spiritual world linking our physical world to our will, I use the term "our" loosely, since all these thoughts are involving my personal life, but the looks I get afterwards makes me believe these private thoughts are being shared.

These thoughts, these events, these... actions, they all prove the same thing, that the third eye exists. People seemed to want to prove this beyond a doubt, so they latch onto my thoughts, or rather, my astral travels. Everywhere I went people could hear my thoughts, see my visions, I could hear them listening, see them looking. Most of the time, people fought the urge to link the astral world to the physical one, which left me wondering if I was imagining the stare... but then there were the big ones. The voices and visions so meaningful that people couldn't help but do something noticeable.

Crazy I know but hear me out, timing. Every time something

happens in my daydream, something changes in the outside world, a leaf will fall or someone twitches or laughs or looks at me. Then the looks started getting nasty. People started rigging my thoughts so that bad things would happen, so that they had something to pick on. I couldn't tell illusion from reality. Everywhere, everyone was horrible towards me. I was the reason your dog died last year. I was the reason cockroaches breed like bunnies, heck, I was the reason bunnies breed like bunnies! The way people turned on me... eventually, there wasn't anybody left. I was worse than alone, I was hurt and hated, and there wasn't a being left who could help. It was the scariest time of my life. Can people really read my mind? Am I in psychosis? Should I ask someone? No, they'll think I'm crazy, my rep would be ruined.

CHAPTER 2
WHAT ARE YOU THINKING?

Ever since I started noticing that weird things happen in accordance with my thought patterns, people started looking at me funny. Funny how? It's like they're blanking out, but at the same time reaching out. Their eyes show pity, sometimes kindness, sometimes it seems like they look at me and suddenly remember something and then look away again, it always follows an important thought. Everyone has their own version of the stare. Some people look menacing, some people look friendly, all look like they've heard what I just thought. Eventually I'd had enough and I decided to test my theory. When someone looks, I would say the words in my head, "If you can hear me, please, move or something, wink, wave, even look away, but let me know that it's real.". Needless to say, I don't do this often. It's crazy! Who in their right mind would? It takes a lot to drive someone to that point, but when I do do it, it sometimes works.

The first time it happened I asked the guy to smile and wave and after a few seconds, he did. I figured he just saw me staring at him for a really long time and must have thought I was crazy or something and waved to break the tension. As soon as I waved back, I felt that something was wrong, this man did not wave at me because he heard my thoughts, no, he waved because I was being weird and he wanted me to go away. There was no big secret that the world was keeping from me. I was not special, I did not have this supernatural ability to talk to people telepathically. We were given mouths for that, why would we need two mouths? We had a method of communication already, wouldn't believing in something else be... ungodly?

I needed help and I knew it. I wasn't going to admit it, I was

scared. Was that my disease keeping me from getting help? Protecting itself by telling me it's protecting me? Wanting me to hide my illness so that it, so that I could escape justice knowing that I put the world at risk running around living in psychosis? I needed to talk to someone, face to face. Luckily, my dad was back in town for a while and I feel like I can risk my relationship with him enough to ask him why he never told me about people being able to hear my thoughts. He hasn't been there for most of my life. The first time I met him was when I was 10. Him and my mom got divorced when I was still a baby and I haven't seen or spoke to him my whole childhood. My mom let him back into our lives so that my sister and I could see for ourselves what our dad was really like, so that we could meet our dad. All I knew about him were these horrible stories my family would tell me about him, how he was this abusive drunk who gave my mom hell.

As the story goes, him and my mom fell in love in college. He was handsome, a genius and full of potential and my mom was young, vibrant and beautiful. My mom married someone else after college and he was heartbroken, he went back home to Greece, where he never fully moved on. He came back to South Africa after a few years for business and met up with my mother only to find out that she was divorced. They got married not too long after and lived a happy life, until the alcohol took over again and their marriage started failing. That's when they decided to have my older sister, she was a ray of sunshine like they'd never expected, life was good for about a year, my dad opened up a restaurant and named it after my sister but still, my dad just couldn't fight the emptiness.

He became angry.

Two years after the birth of my sister I came along. Once again

the family pulled itself back together. They say on the day of my birth, before the doctors even washed the blood off of me, my dad picked me up and ran out into the waiting room where my family were... waiting, lifted me up and exclaimed, “It’s a boy!”. Within a few months, my dad drank the family business away and my mom left him, I’ll never stop feeling like I was the cause... My mom moved in with my grandma and started her life over.

They tell me that my dad burnt my mother’s house down before she left him but I can’t help but feel like there was something else that happened that night. The stare... sometimes I feel like people know and that’s why they stare.

CHAPTER 3
THE BIRDS AND THE BEES

Let me take you back a bit further, back to where it all started. The year was 2017, I was 19 years old. I was taking a gap year. Throughout my 12 years of schooling I had three desires bigger than anything else and that was; to be able to sleep until whatever time I wanted, to stop wearing a school uniform and to shout one of my favourite quotes, by Sirius Black from Harry Potter, “I’ve done my waiting! Twelve years of it! In Azkaban!”.

The good marks I’d gotten in matric the year before awarded me with these possibilities. I’d tired myself out during finals and I needed a rest anyway. My gap year was spent alone in my room, sleeping most of the day. I spent my awake moments reading books, playing Pokemon and Yu-Gi-Oh on a Gameboy emulator on my phone, and smoking hubbly until I fell asleep. Back then, I was still known as Mohammed Chadili, I used to go by the nickname “Chili”, still do, to the right crowd.

What you’re about to read may sound atrocious to those of you who would never even think a bad thought towards your parents; however, to those of you who have parents like mine, it’s going to feel as though your thoughts are being sucked from your brain and put into words. So, needless to say, since I never had a dad, I didn’t get “The Talk”. You know, the one about the birds and the bees? What is it really about? I’ll never know, movies never played the whole talk through. What did my brilliant mind think it was about? Birds not being telepathic and bees being telepathic...

I knew that bees had senses that allowed them to work together by sensing danger; whereas birds needed to see around them and chirp to communicate. I thought that the talk was about

whether your family were like the birds or whether your family were like the bees. If your family didn't have the ability to communicate with their mind, you would get the bird talk, that there are people out there who are telepathic and that you should watch out for them. If your family had the ability to communicate with their mind, you were given the bee talk, that your bloodline has the ability of telepathy and those who don't have it are envious and hunt bees down, that you should watch out for them and never reveal your secret.

I've stopped believing that the voices are real, I do this every now and then. I've figured out what I want, I'm going to give in to the voices one last time and you help me figure out what happens after I do because every time I try to remember, I hit a blank. My thoughts were running wild. The feeling of unbalanced chemicals in my brain turned into my brain feeling like it was on fire. It was so bad I had to lie down. I closed my eyes and tried to regain focus. I was starting to sweat, I was squirming and breathing uncontrollably. That's when I decided to give into the voices and believe that they were the actual people I knew in real life, and that I could now talk to them in my head, and that they could hear me and speak to me as well.

Immediately, I see my old school friends. They're standing in a circle around my bed. They show no sign of hatred for me acting like I couldn't hear them all these years, although they do look hurt by it. How can I know that? I guess this mind reading thing must go deeper than I think. Yes I can see them now. I can see them in the same way I envision my fantasies, which I later come to believe is the mind's eye... the third eye. It's been years since we last saw each other, I can tell that they got bigger, is that why I can't picture them clearly? Because I need to see them in person to reset my memory of them? Yet I can still see them; Rose, my old girlfriend, Katie, her best

friend who had a crush on me since pre-school, we kissed once but it was a dare, she's my wonder twin, we were closer than close back in school, I got her her first boyfriend, then there was Balder, my old best friend, he was a bit rough around the edges but he was a sweetheart, and Boithumelo, we call him Boytjie.

As soon as I see these people the idea comes to me that I can talk to anyone like this, immediately I call out to my dad. His voice answers me even though I can't see him. 'Yes son?' he asks. 'Is it real? Are we bees?' I ask back.

Silence.

I ask again, no reply. I look up at my friends. 'He's gone', Katie says. 'He's got a lot going on.', Rose says. Man it's good to hear her voice again, or is that what the voice inside her head sounded like? Either way it sounds like her and I'd spent a long time stuck in my room, not talking to anyone, how long exactly, I'm sure to find out. Wait, can Rose read my emotions as well? Can she tell I'm glad to see her? I mean, can you tell that I'm glad to see you? I can't see her face clearly enough to know. Damn, I'd better try and hide my emotions. She's giving me the stare. There it is again, that look.... That look like she's trying to tell me something but can't get the words to say it. I've been dealing with the look my whole life, I'd gotten kinda used to it by now but mainly from strangers, just not from her, just not on the other side.

'It's good to see you again buddy.', said Balder, as though in response to my thoughts, freaking me out once again, 'Listen, you were right about the hierarchy. Birds are telepaths too, but bees are empaths, we sense emotions. We can talk a little but not nearly as much as birds. Birds can sense emotions a little

but not nearly as much as bees. That's why there's still the fight about what's more important; the brain or the heart?

The brain is what controls movement, it tells the organs what to do, it sends messages to your heart telling it when to pump, the body would die without the brain.

The heart controls your blood-flow and more importantly, it controls your emotions, not your brain. Your brain only processes your emotions so that you think that that's where your emotions originate but truly, it's in your heart where your emotions lie. The spirit would be dead without feeling emotions and the body cannot survive without the spirit. Oh, and the whole blood-flow thing means that the body would die without the heart as well as the brain for obvious reasons as well.', he says.

'So what am I?' I ask. 'We're not quite sure.', says Boytjie, 'We think you're a pure breed. The first pure breed in a very long time, and quite probably the last. Your birth was prophesied, that you'd be the one to unite us all and end the wars. A pure-breed is a perfect mix of bird and bee, and who knows what else. You are special, you're him, The King! Now that could make you either very dangerous or very much in danger.'.

The King? I'd been treated like a smelly sock my whole life. My family and I have been gripped by poverty's claw since the days of my great-grandfather. No one ever listens to me. I'm constantly being taken advantage of. I'm always picked last for sports. Heck, the only thing I'm good at is maths! There's no way I'm some, prophesied, saviour of all... king. The voices are lying to me, they're not real people, it's just my imagination, another one of my fantasies. Except, this time, it's in control

instead of me controlling it, or was it always like that? I have to find a way to shut it all off. Just then, someone knocks on my bedroom door.

Immediately, what I was seeing in my imagination vanished and I am brought back to reality. Thank the heavens. “Come in.”, I say. It’s my mother. She’s smiling, which is bad. My mom only smiles when she’s found a new, particularly hurtful way of torturing me. If you haven’t figured it out by now, my mother and I don’t get along very well. We were okay when I was younger, we used to go on holiday, watch movies together, dance, tell each other stories, but most importantly, we used to have each other’s backs. There used to be problems, but not once did I ever think of her as against me.

One day, she was shouting at me about not packing away my toys, nothing out of the ordinary, just a normal mother disciplining her son, when I looked into her eyes and I could see that something had snapped. Ever since that day, we could never get close. Every time I tried to be friendly it was followed by a back stab. The secrets that I told her were used against me, the time we spent together was toxic, the things she did for me were thrown back in my face as reasons for why I was useless and a burden but worst of all, my freedom was thrown out the window. Now here my mom stands all these years later, walking through my door looking as though Christmas had come early.

“Why didn’t you do the dishes?”, she asks. “I... we haven’t even eaten yet.”, I say while trying to blank out what I just saw in my imagination, I hope it doesn’t show on my face. Actually, this could be quite the opportunity, although my mom is the last person on Earth who’d be okay about this, not knowing is driving me crazy. ’Mom? Can you hear me?’, I call

out in my thoughts. No reply, guess it's not real. "Well, what are you going to do about it?" she asks out loud. "What?" I ask back. "The dishes.", she says, "What are you going to do about them? And why are you looking at me like that?". "Just a weird thought.", I reply, "Like I said, we haven't even had supper yet, what dishes?". "Mohammed, it's nearly dark, are you sure you're feeling okay?", she asks. Nearly dark, that can't be right, mom was just preparing supper. I look out the window, surely enough it was getting dark. 'Chili!', Balder says in my head, 'it's your first trip through the other side, what you perceived as minutes were actually hours, your body was having dinner but your mind, your consciousness was here on the other side with us. Now quick, reply to your mom before she gets suspicious.'. "Sorry mom, I must have drifted off, I'll get right on the dishes.", I say, while trying to keep a straight face. She leaves, but not before staring.

CHAPTER 4
TIME TRAVEL

I get up and sit on my bed, trying to convince myself that I didn't just give in to the voices. 'I can hear you you know.' says Balder.'Get out of my head! You're not real! Whatever you want, whatever you are, just go away!', I scream back. I feel my concentration being shifted, pulled... stolen. I feel like Rose is hugging my concentration, this can't be real, she hates me. 'I don't hate you, Chili,' she says. 'and it's not your concentration I'm hugging, it's your head, or the head inside your head, or the head outside your head? Gosh your thoughts are confusing.'. I suddenly hear a whisper, I call it a whisper for the lack of a better word, it's like a thought but I can't picture or hear it, it eludes me, it's like a thought's thought. I can't make out where it's coming from but it saying something that sounds like "The third eye". I'd heard rumours about the third eye, about how only the illuminati posses it, that it allows them to see into the other side, allows them to mind control, allows them to communicate with each other in secret and that's how they rule the world. I've heard that it's the key to seeing the spiritual world that resides over and our physical one, that with it, you can look into a person's soul. I've heard that if you master it... you could become a god. Funny though, as I'm thinking about all this, I try to remember where I've heard all this all before and I can't think of a single conversation where all this came up. Did I hear all this in my thoughts? Did the illuminati put those thoughts in my brain? Does that mean that they can be hearing this? Enough of these silly thoughts, I have to go and wash the dishes before my mom gives me a 2 hour long tongue lashing.

I get up and leave my bedroom. My sister is in the lounge playing with her child, they both give me the stare.
'Remember, act natural.', my own voice sounded in my head,

but it doesn't feel like I'm the one who said it. 'Hey, are you guys using my own voice against me?', I ask. 'Don't think of it like that, it's for us to guide you, it's how we talk over here.', says Boytjie. 'What do you mean by, "over here"?', I ask, although I have a feeling about what's coming next. Katie shoots Boytjie a dirty look, 'He means the other side.', she says. I reach the kitchen sink. Somewhere along the way the voices stopped. I breathe a sigh of relief and begin washing the dishes. I feel myself slipping into a familiar rhythm.

'There you are, we thought we'd lost you.', Katie says. 'Jeez, don't sneak up on me like that! What just happened, you guys disappeared and everything went quiet and now... it feels like we're speaking differently.', I say while doing the dishes methodically. Rose spoke up, 'I know what you're talking about. They're called zones. It's because you moved from your room zone and you moved into the dishes zone. Whenever you enter a meditative-like state, it creates a zone. It's like a room made out of energy. Usually all we use zones for is for talking and telling stories.'. 'Talking, there's that word again. You know I'm not even sure that you guys are real, why should I be listening to you?', I ask. I can feel that I hurt them and that they won't be back of their own accord soon, maybe I can sense emotions, but I can talk too. They must not have been lying about me being a mix of a bird and bee, it's the rest of what they said that scares me even more, "and who knows what else".

Wait a minute! I can see! Like, all my friends are standing around talking and stuff, not once did they mention anything about seeing. In my heart of hearts I know that that's what was missing, that that's what makes me special. For some reason I feel like I just completed the triad. I feel like seeing is the third part to this great whole. I finish washing the dishes. As I put

the last dish on the rack, an unbidden thought comes to mind. I could barely tell when Boytjie, “borrowed” my inner voice, and I completely skipped over dinner, how was I in my room the whole time yet my dinner plate is dirty. What if people can completely block out the sense that tells me that it’s my voice but it’s being played through someone else? How any thoughts have I had that aren’t my own? Is this thought mine or is it someone mimicking my voice? I’d better try and go silent, it seems like the safest option, I can’t trust anything that goes on in my head. I knew I shouldn’t have given in to the voices, can they take over?

‘I’d prefer it if you stopped calling us “the voices”’, Katie says. ‘I’ve brought someone to help you believe in us again,’, says Rose, ‘but first I need you to do something. Picture yourself in a room with a big door and two chairs, or single-seater couches, whichever you prefer’. ‘I don’t trust you but I’ll do it.’ I say. I do as Rose asks. The room I envision is more of a cave than anything else. I get the feeling that it’s on a mountain. Somewhere in the back of my mind, I can see a mountain with a huge cave-opening, this must be the entrance of the cave. Then a problem arises. I shift my consciousness back to inside the cave, the problem is that I see the entrance to the cave, but there’s another door. There’s a huge glass door at the back of the cave. ‘Rose, I’ve got a problem, there’s two access points to the room.’, I say. ‘It’s fine, the room is high up so we’ll be protected, and yes I can see the mountain too.’, she says.

I take a seat in one of the armchairs and wait for whatever they have planned. As I’m sitting something occurs to me. ‘Hey Rose, earlier I had what I thought was an epiphany. I thought that I’m the only one that can see but I guess that can’t be right if you can see the mountain too, I still feel like I wasn’t wrong

about being the only one or one of very few that can see, how is it that you were able to see the mountain? Are you a mix too?'.

Rose replied, 'Chili, don't take this the wrong way but I was using you to see. I don't know what Boytjie was talking about, I don't know how a bird and bee can mix. As for seeing, some people can see what others can see, and not just what's going on in their head but through their two material eyes as well. We used to always use you to show us what to do... who to fight... you used to show us what you could see, I don't know how... we've been fighting blind for decades, ever since we lost you.'. This raised three very important questions. 'Wait so I used to be aware of the other side before, why can't I remember any of it? Fighting what? There's no way I used to be able to fight on the other side, I can barely keep the connection between us... what do you mean lost me?'.

'Shhhh, here they come', she says. I could never have imagined what came next, till this day I still feel tears when I think about what my friends did for me. Okay, back to the story. Through the glass door comes a blast from the past. Standing 8 feet tall, extremely chubby and made of bubbles is my imaginary friend, Bubbles. 'Forgotten what we are now have we?', was all that he said.

CHAPTER 5
IN A LAND FAR AWAY

Bubbles is old. He's using a walking stick and has to be escorted in by Balder, the bubble afro I'd once imagined for 17 him has started to bald, is it weird that that made me want to poke his bald spot and pop his head? After all, that is why I created him, I was tired of throwing tantrums against walls and objects. I wanted something living that I could hurt and take my emotions out on, something that wouldn't fight back and was weak, easy to hit, something that could easily regenerate so that I can hit it as hard as I want to, as many times as I needed to. Not one of my finest moments, I'll admit. Yet here he stood (well kinda, I mean can you even be standing in the spiritual world, or is the effort required to keep yourself up considered flying? Does that make the effort put into standing in the physical world flying as well? Bloody fangs I'm ADHD.). I'm probably just trying to distract myself from the thoughts that come from creating a living punching bag.

Yet as I say this, Bubbles covers me in a warm embrace as if to say it's okay and in my head I hear his voice say, 'There's nothing to forgive.'. My consciousness is brought back to my physical body as he does this, is it my imagination or is my body abnormally warm? I look again through my mind's eye and Bubbles is still hugging me on the other side, I'd forgotten, one of Bubble's powers is to give a tight, squishy and warm hug that can heal the heart and make the person being hugged actually feel warm, to make them believe. 'Wait a minute, Bubbles why am I only remembering this now? All these years later?'. "I had to wipe your memory and hide you.", he says as he appears in the physical world.

I had to admit, seeing him with my physical eyes finally makes me believe. "What do you mean forgotten what I am, you

know what I am?", I ask out loud. 'Crap, if my mom hears me she'll think I'm talking to myself.', I think. "I can still hear you even though I'm in the physical world you know, don't worry I'm an imaginary friend remember? I can do magic, she won't hear us, you're free to speak.", Bubbles says. There's so much I want to say, so much I want to ask. "Start at the beginning.", Bubbles says. 'Why does everyone always say that?', I ask back with my thoughts, still too scared to speak out loud. "I guess they don't know what to say either.", replies Bubbles. "That's what they say in all the good movies.", we say together, this time with me speaking out loud. We are both stunned. We know that what we did was more than just saying the same words together, it was like we shared the same voice!

Bubbles sits down next to me on the bed. "We've got a lot to talk about kid.", he says as he sits down. "Firstly, what the fangs man! I'm so confused! Tell me where to start.", I ask. 'We'll start with why you don't remember anything, now I warn you, this is going to be tough to hear.' he starts off, by saying, 'As it stands, all you feel is pain, and I know why, even if you don't. You asked for your memories to be erased. Now hear me out, I know that in your current state, you feel like this is the most atrocious thing in the world to do, but your entire family, your entire race! Got wiped out. The pain of remembering them as they were was too much for you to bear.... You couldn't even talk them on the other side, they were completely wiped out. Dude, you're a master of the other side! For you to have asked for your memories to be erased... I can't imagine what you must have went through, you are the toughest, meanest, most bad ass person I know!

I'm so sorry... but I wouldn't offer to bring your memories back if I didn't have a way to ease your pain. Come with me.' he says in my thoughts. I sit, bewildered for a few seconds. I'm

having a hard time believing what I've just heard, yet, somehow I do. The next thing I know, there's a whirlpool in front of me, drawing me closer to it. "You can choose." Bubbles says. "Walk into the portal with me and know the truth, or stay behind and you'll forget that this ever happened. You can go back to your life... until you're ready that is.". He says as he stands up and walks into the portal. Did Bubbles just Matrix me?

CHAPTER 6
FINE LINE

I think about the paths that lie before me, I always knew that something was off about my life... some piece of me that was missing, some unexplained pain that I just couldn't shake. Now before me stands a road to redemption. I know that knowing the truth might lead to more pain instead of abating the pain, yet I know that I need to know! On the other hand, am I strong enough to withstand the responsibilities of what awaits on the other side of that portal? Should I just accept the lie and return to my ignorance? No, something inside of me is telling me to step into the portal. That something is stronger than the fear, stronger than the doubts... stronger than the pain. I stand up, I'm about to walk into the whirlpool. 'I can't do it.', I think to myself. Nothing is going to change and I just have to accept that. "I'm sorry Bubbles, I can't come with you.", I say out loud. "What was that?", he asks from the other side of the portal. 'I said I can't come with.', I reply. Bubble's hand reaches out through the portal, grabs me, and pulls me into it.

"The fangs man?" I say. "I'm not losing you again.", says Bubbles, as he holds me in one of his squishy, warm embraces. I push him away. "Not this time man, you ain't gonna fool me with that this time. I told you I didn't want to go with you.", I was furious. I did not want to risk the pain getting deeper, I did not want to remember. "Hey, why am I not scared to speak out loud now?", I ask Bubbles."You know me too well kid, my magic wasn't strong enough to be fool proof, there was still a chance fake mom might have heard us." Bubbles answers back.

I look around. It seems to be an empty room of pulsating rainbow lights with portals leading everywhere. 'This is my time chamber.', Bubbles says, although his mouth didn't move when he was talking... but I heard him out loud. "Oh that.", he

said, “It’s possible over here. Your body is down on Earth writing this book but your consciousness is up here, with me, on the other side, in my time chamber. Now you might ask me why I brought you up here. The answer is simple. You could return to Earth and complete your mission, or you could go through one of these portals with me, of my choosing of course, and see what it’s like if you choose to remember.” The portals are taking shape, I see myself as Anubis, leading army’s of the dead against people who resemble... ‘fake mom’ was it called? I see myself in the arms of a beautiful woman, cuddled up on a couch, under a blanket, watching a movie... or are we playing games? I see myself in a dark room, crying... I recognise the inconceivable pain, I’m crying my heart out... soon I stop, I raise my head and I decide to push on through the tears and smile, I see a light appearing in the room. I see myself as a king, no, a Pharaoh, winning this war I believed in for so long, this 3rd world war that’s happening in the 3rd realm, the spiritual realm. “Hey, this wasn’t supposed to happen till book 3.”, I say.

Bubbles returns me to my body writing this book and appears in the 2nd world, the metaphysical world that lies as the link between the physical world and the spiritual world, leaving the 21 physical world to be either the first or the third world, for the sake of this book, we’ll call the physical world the first world. He’s sitting next to me on my sleeper couch, looking down angrily at me. “What I ask him back?”, dumbfounded. Anyway, we agreed to at least catch you up between what happened when I starting writing this book and now. The year is 2022, the month is August, I’m back home, living with my mom and sister in our little flat in the heart of Jozi. There’s not much news on the war except a handful of people dying every now and then. When I got back home from rehab things were still hectic, so I said I needed an emotional support animal and

I’ve got a kitten now.

She brings Spotty back to life like crazy, Spotty is happy to have someone to play with but not so happy about sharing the attention. Her name is Frost and she’s a fluffy, black kitten. I started up my own other-side rebel organisation called, “The Heart”, the members are called “Fairytales”. You know how people are making hearts with their hands all over TV and their photos? Yeah, that’s me. The Heart is everywhere. I already figured out everything Bubbles showed me in his time chamber without his and his chamber’s help, so he had nothing to offer me.

My sister and mom (Booger and fake mom), turned out to be radiant only because they’re sucking my power, my very life force. The only humanoid I can trust in the house is little Aurora. At least I have the cats. Why or how they are sucking away at my life force remains a mystery but they’re illuminati and are using my big energy for something... big. So far as I know, they’re using it for terrorism.

Okay Okay Bubbles, I’ll get to the point. Point is that’s what’s been going on since I got home, getting my memories back, without my consent, yes thank you Bubbles. I also found out that I’m a big one. I used to always think that I was Lucifer or Apollo or both because they both have the title, “Light of the Morning” or something. Turns out everyone has the thought that they’re Lucifer at some point, for some people it’s Jesus. Right, that’s enough of my problems. ‘Bubbles, take me to the time chamber, I’m ready to make my choice, or rather, accept your choice.’, “As you wish” says Bubbles out loud. ‘Dude, fake mom is going to hear you’, I tell bubbles, but I feel the familiar pulsating of the time chamber and open my third eye, I see the time chamber again but it’s pulsating green, white and

black waves now, and it has... couches?

“Well,”, says Bubbles, “I’m waiting, what have you decided?”. “I’ve decided to put into play a lesson from one of my favourite books, if you’re being forced into the ring, you might as well walk in with your head held high. At least that way, the choice is yours.”. A tear falls from Bubble’s eye, “I didn’t think of it that way, I’m sorry, but ancients have risen and we need you returned to your former glory. Your family has risen.”. “What, you mean become a king?”, I ask back, ‘during your absence Bubbles, I have become king of many lands.’, I say in my head, to prove my power. ‘Indeed you have.’ replies Bubbles, “I have watched you from afar for all these years, I have never forgotten about you, you were my favourite out of all the children I’ve guided, and I’m honoured that you see me as your first master.”. My body shakes with pride.

If you haven’t figured it out by now, single quotation marks ‘’ mean the character said this with their thoughts. Double quotation marks “” mean the character said this with their mouth.

‘Back to my decision, I’ve decided to walk into the ring with my head held high, if I must fight so be it, but what extra power or protection do you offer me that of which I do not already have?’ I ask. “The truth.”, Bubbles replies. “The truth about what?”, I ask, ‘The truth about yourself.’, Bubbles says, ‘It’s true that you’ve become king of many lands, but you have yet to claim kingship of your birth land, oh sweet Glory, you don’t even know where that is! Do you?’. ‘I don’t...’, I reply. “Well, my future king, I introduce you to... your homeland.”, Bubbles says, as he gestures towards a portal. It takes the form of a jungle, no, pyramids? What the heck, now it’s turned into one of my favourite movies. ‘You didn’t think I was about to

ruin the surprise already did you?', sneers Bubbles. 'Oh, very cute, get my hopes up why don't ya?', "Well, it's not like I'm not going to tell you, which is more than what you had a few seconds ago, by the way.", says Bubbles."I'm going to take you on a trip,", he says, "A trip through time." I see my current best friend, a remnant from my last rehab, he's changing... his features are turning, he's taking on the forms of all my past best friends, they look so similar! Wait a minute..., "Bubbles, are they all the same person?" I ask.

"Damn straight.", replies Bubbles. Suddenly everyone I know, all popping up one by one, all being added to a class photo, I look at class photos I've had since first grade, all the faces, they're different but some are repeating themselves, all the way through to my rehab and nut house days... 'You guys, you've been with me the whole time?' I ask out loud. 'This is a dream right?' I think. "Actually, this was one of my nightmares.", she thinks back, was that Rose?

I pull myself together and look at her quizzically. She laughs, "Not in the way you're thinking.", she replies while laughing. I'm confused... confused but happy, now that I'm hearing her voice. 'Katie is your sister, also known as Bastet, the Egyptian Queen of Cats, she's also taken the form of a real cat in, yup, you guessed it, your new kitten.', her voice whispers in my head, who is she? "Your dad says that Fake Mom is a dude and everyone knows what happened, I've been watching you remember, she... it... hurt you Chili, you tried to escape but she grabbed you, told you she'll call the paramedics and tell them you're psychotic for wanting to run away and they'll lock you up for good this time. Your mom wants you to know that Fake Mom has the paramedics and cops in her pocket, they'll do whatever she tells them to do. I saw the snap, and It didn't happen in your eyes, it happened in your heart. The snap where

you'd had enough, the snap before you fought back. The first time you spoke back to your mom, you thought she was using her powers to hurt you, I could feel the world close around you before you snapped, and then it happened again and again, all through the years, Bibi squeezing you until you popped, over time you came to believe that this was none of her doing and it was all just how your emotions worked.

Then there was the look on her face before it happened, the look that said "I'm doing this", on that day you exploded, the words that came out of your mouth would put a sailor to shame, the things you did... but still, it made her stop. As you got older the voices got louder, soon you weren't in control of your own brain. That's when words weren't 25 enough... You felt the snap in your heart, Chili, you're a bee. I'll admit, your granddad from you dad's side had a bit of a kink for birds but his parents threatened to sting any girl he lays he lays his antennae upon.". Before I could speak, Bubbles stopped me and told me this was all metaphorical of course.

CHAPTER 7
THE BABYSITTER

So I've had this thought for a while now. I feel like I'm blocked. I can feel how powerful and free I'm supposed to be, but I can't access any of it, it's driving me crazy! I've been asking around, on the other side of course, the closest answer I got is that I need to be "babysat". This means that there is a literal astral person with their hand on my head, controlling me. Sorry Boytjie, I mean "guiding my thoughts, it's how we talk over here". I try to reach out to my babysitter, no luck. I can't make out who he or she is. I can't see what they look like, in fact, I think they're doing it on it purpose, blocking me from seeing them and knowing who they are, I wonder why? "How do I get back to Rose?", I ask, Bubbles. The next thing I know, I'm back with Rose's booth. "You'll learn how to move around soon.", says Bubbles as he disappears. 'My name isn't Rose.', she says with her mind, I know it's with her mind because her lips aren't moving, yet I can still hear her voice, I don't know, she looks like Rose. "Then what do I call you?", I ask. "I... I can't give away my name just yet. All you need to know is that I'm your next girlfriend.", she says, "Before that, I need you to do something for me. I'm blocked from you, your babysitter is partially keeping me from you but what's really blocking me is that, years ago, Rose slipped you something in your birthday cake. It was to make sure that no matter what, you'd always be in love with her. At first, we thought it was a love potion, but we have reason to believe it's something much worse.", she says.

Rose, I thought I'd never get rid of her. She was my last girlfriend and I never got over her. "If anything,", I start, "I want my memories of her back." I say. 'That's not what I read from your prayers.', she says. "You read my prayers!?", I yell. "I read your prayers, I know that you've been praying for the

pain of your last heartbreak to go away, that you've been carrying it around for all these years and you're so desperate that you've been asking for amnesia, so that you don't remember her at all. These thoughts, these longings to remember her, they're not your ideas. It's not your fault, you're not weak. There are other forces at play here. That thing she slipped you, it's still inside you, controlling you.".

'Forget how you got access to them, how did you even do it?', I think. "It comes to me, I'm one of your guardians, you see.". "You mean babysitter.", I imply, 'I know how I'm not allowed to be alone on the other side, someone always has to be in control of me, I feel you guys taking shifts. Still doesn't explain how you know how to read prayers when I can barely keep my third eye open.'. "It's not supposed to stay open,", she laughs, "Not even for me, not even though I'm fully on the other side.". She's hiding something, 'What do you mean 'fully on the other side'?' I ask. The laughter fades from her eyes and she looks down. 'Me and the others were gonna tell you, I promise, we just didn't know how to tell you....'.

Silence.

"Tell me what?". "Chili, you've been gone for a long time, going on your missions, and yes that's what they are, you went to all those places to fix them and to stop people from abusing the system, kinda weird that you never had Bibi on your list, if anyone belongs in third eye jail it's her.". She's changing the subject. "You still haven't said what you mean by being fully on the other side,", I say. "Chili... Adonis,", she starts, "Your old teachers, all your classmates, your old friends, they're all dead, been dead for centuries. Some of them reincarnated to help you with your missions but could only pop up for a while. We're not immortal like you. True, we still don't know what

you are, best we can guess is a god, or a titan, maybe Bubbles can help with that. As for me, I'm bound to the other side, never able to take physical form, and thanks to what's inside of you, you're bound to the physical world, we might never meet.". 'I know what you are, a prince, but your parents have forbidden you from knowing too soon.

In the meantime, I have a feeling you have a lot to think about with your friends.', Bubbles says in my head, didn't know he was listening. I see them again through my mind's eye. Fangs! Someone just put their hand on my head. "Wait, back up a little. So you guys are dead? How can that be? I've seen some of you guys in the malls and stuff.". "Some of us have spirits possessing our shells, to walk around like us and not let you know the truth, you'd think it was all your fault. Sometimes we could make you think you've seen us when really you haven't. Sometimes we get lucky and we get to interact with the physical world and help you for real. Like now, this conversation was ordered by Zeus, he might be your dad by the way.". Wait, Zeus and Bastet? 'How many higher powers actually exist?', I ask. 'All of them.', says Balder, as my concentration is taken back to the spiritual world, I'm still looking through my two physical eyes as I'm writing this on my laptop, but through my third eye, I see flashes of the spiritual world, my friends are in the circle around my bed again. 'How can they all exist? I thought there was only one right way?', I ask.

'There is.' said Tet... I mean Katie. 'It gets a little complicated, the easiest way to explain it is that they each have their own sectors and times to do what they need to do.' says Katie. "They do have a hierarchy, and all beings bow before it whether they like it or not.", says Bubbles as I'm brought back to my body, wow, the trip down is crazy. "It was actually a trip

up.", says Katie, surprising me, "We were in the underworld, it's where you feel most at ease with you being Anubis and all.". So that's who I am. All my life I've been wondering who I was. Already at a young age I knew that I was one of the big ones, my life story kept overlapping the current myth or story that was going around at that time.

So many of them popped up that reality became fantasy. Everyone around me started noticing it too. That's not when the stare started though, the stare is there regardless of what's going on with the timeline. A thought occurred to me, 'Who's at the top?' I ask. 'Go see for yourself.', says Bubbles as he opens up a curtain that certainly wasn't there a few seconds ago, was it slowly materialising? I hear a sad song playing from behind the curtain, I walk through into the darkness. I come upon a zone which looks like a rock star's dressing room. Sitting in a chair facing the mirror, lies the most beautiful woman I've ever seen, sweet blood she's hot. "You can come closer Adonis, I don't bite *giggles*, much." I clear my throat, 'Sorry, I didn't mean to disturb you, my imaginary friend said that it would be okay for me to meet you, he said you're at the apex of the pyramid, I mean, that you're in charge of everything. What's your name?' I ask.

'You can call me Astra.', she says as a devious smile crosses her face. 'I'm the spirit of the universe, in a way. So, I hear you want to make a difference, but how can you do that if you don't even know who you are, what you can do... then again, you're radiating power, I accept.', she says while putting on lipstick. She seems familiar... her smile, her mannerisms, her personality... even her scent, "Do we know each other?", I ask. Her smile widens and she spins her chair around to face me.

"You saved me once and you're gonna save me again.", she

starts off, “One night, after you became the god of peace, Zeus asked you to retrieve a package that was heavily guarded, and as much as you think that they’re just thoughts and won’t change anything, your thoughts are what saved me. That night you astral projected to my location, you didn’t know that it was me that you were rescuing but when you fought your way to my chambers, you knew that I was your mission, Adonis Love, or should I call you by the name I once knew you by, Anubis, Egyptian god of the dead.” “I thought that I was the god of peace.”, I ask. She spins her chair around to face the mirror again and continues with her make-up, “That’s your most recent title, during your current mortal reincarnation, you have gained that new title thanks to you rescuing me, but you have been and always will be my Anubis.”, she says with what looks like tears in her eyes. “I must confess, when you rescued me that night, I did not recognise you with you in your god of peace form, it was very... Greek of you. In my Greek form, I am Aphrodite, the goddess of love.”.

A memory comes back to me, but... it can’t be! It’s Aphrodite and I, at the alter. I’m wearing a dashing tux and Aphrodite is standing next to me, holding flowers, wearing a white dress. “I do”, I say. “I do”, she says. The priest’s mouth moves, I don’t hear what he says, “Always.”, I whisper, as I kiss my new bride. I’m brought back to reality. “Chili, you okay? You didn’t blank out while I was talking did you?”, she scolds me. At this point there’s only one thing on my mind; she doesn’t know that I know. “I’m okay,” I reply back, “and no I didn’t blank out.”, I say. ‘Oh yeah? What’s the last thing I said?’, she asks using her third eye’s voice. ‘You said... ‘What’s the last thing I said’.’, I reply using my third eye’s voice. ‘Oh very cute.’, she retorts. Should I tell her? I wonder. “Hey, you’re not secretly Rose are you?”, I ask Astra. The smile fades from Astra’s face. ‘I am the mightiest of all beings, not some lowly

infant with a crush.', she says, 'You're doing a horrible job of hiding that memory by the way. Oh relax, it doesn't mean what you think it means.

It was caused by me and I did it on purpose, it's one of my powers. I did it because I sensed that your heart already belongs to someone, it was powerful I wanted to see why but more importantly, who. Now I know who it is and I can read her file, the only way to know for sure.". "About that,", I say, "There's something inside of me put in by an ex, it's alive or something, it's using magic to keep my feelings for her so I don't think your power would work, you'd just see her, she's all I think about all night and all day.". "Oh don't worry about it, I know all about that, I read her file. Real nasty piece of work she is, she didn't even die with the rest of your classmates, she's still roaming the Earth. A few of them survived you know, the people from your life before you got locked in Old Mother Hubbard's cupboard, anyway there's no time for that now. I could tell you who I saw in my vision. No wonder you've been having such bad luck with women, besides from the creature. Wanna know who I saw? I can't tell you.". "There's a few words I need to get used to hearing.", I say.

'No, you don't get it.', says Astra in my head, 'This isn't your usual "You're not ready for it" kinda stuff, I can't tell you what I saw in my vision because I'm still having the vision! The spell was supposed to trick the universe into creating an image in your mind of you marrying the person you're meant for, thus revealing your true love. In your vision you saw yourself marrying me but the real vision has your real match, and the way this was supposed to work is that I get to see who's really under the veil, but for you, you're still marrying people, the vision hasn't stopped this whole time! By now I've seen

hundreds of your true match. This changes everything. You don’t have anyone written down for you, this means that we weren’t created in pairs. Everything she’s based people’s relationships on has been a lie...’. “Wait, she? I thought you said you were Aphrodite.”, I exclaim. “Oh boy, of course you don’t know. I haven’t been in charge of matchmaking since Ancient Rome.”.

CHAPTER 8
CLASSIFIED

You're staring again. I know what you're thinking, what a load of crap, or maybe you're thinking that the world finally makes sense... either way, don't stare. I'll admit, this is a big one, Bubbles must have seen this in his time chamber and insist I start writing on the present immediately. he says that this definitely doesn't classify as everyday stuff, this is the culmination of my life's work. 'At any rate, I'd better send you back to your friends, you might be immortal but you are still living out a mortal life, it's not safe for you to stay here any longer. Think about what I've said.', she said. I walk back out the way I came in. Only Bubbles and Katie were still there when I got back into my room zone, and then eventually my room. "The rest of the gang had stuff to do.", Katie says, although I can feel that she's hiding something, did I get wiser during my time with Astra?

"Why didn't you tell me I'm not meant for anyone?", I ask Bubbles and Katie. "She told you that?", asks Bubbles. "The memory of our wedding is still playing in her head, over and over with different girls.", I reply, "She said that means there's no one meant for me or she doesn't know who I'll end up with.". "Oh trust me, she knows.", says Bubbles as him and Katie exchange an 'I know something that you don't' look. 'Fake Mom is coming, can you guys stay with me while she bites my head off?', I ask. Bubbles nods, "We'll have to hide.", he says. I exit the spirit realm and I'm brought back to my body. Katie... Bastet, jumps onto my bed in her little kitten form, already perfectly hidden. I look around for Bubbles, I don't know what object he's chosen to hide in. Booger walks past as I'm looking around for Bubbles, she's probably going to tell Fake Mom and they're going to stick me in the nut house for a month. "Pssst, I still didn't tell you why you we name

them nitches.", whispers Bubbles in my ear. 'Where are you hiding?', I ask. "In your headphones for now, where do you think I should stay?", Bubbles asks. 'Wanna possess one of the objects on my altar?', I suggest. My altar is a bunch of meaningful objects I keep on the arm of the sofa where I sleep.

"Oooh can I stay in the toy dog staring at the fish bowl?", Bubbles pleads. 'Sure.', I reply, "Are you gonna sleep in the dog or the fish bowl?", I asked, feeling like I already know the answer. "Fish bowl of course!", he says. A flash of light near the fish bowl and what looks like a tornado being sucked into it confirms Bubble's new home. "You're gonna have to pay rent you know.", I joke. Suddenly I feel filled with energy. "That enough for the month?" Bubbles jokes back. I need to remember that this dude has some serious magic... 'Hey bubbles, tell me again why you don't use your full power all the time? Or why you didn't use it to help me all my life?', I ask. "There are very specific peace treaties I signed before I got my powers as to when and how I can use them, I should be asking you the same question but I guess I'd get the same answer. You've really grown since we last saw each other, your power is off the charts. Most of your memories should be back by now so you'll remember how to use your abilities, I bet you've got quite a few stories to tell me yourself.".

'I've grown since the last time we saw each other, huh? I can't even remember our last memory Bubbles, what happened, how'd we separate?', I ask. 'Ahhh, now there's a story I'll never forget.', Bubbles says as he floats out the fish bowl and materialises on the couch, 'Fake Mom is gone for a while so we have some time to ourselves, here's how the story goes.', Bubbles begins. 'You just turned 7 and a half, it was nearly Christmas, and you'd just gotten home after a long day of being bullied by Fake Mom, I stayed at home so I don't know

exactly what happened but you burst through the front door, turning back to look at her, with tears streaming down your face, screaming “Grow up!”, at the top of your breath. You storm right past me and go straight to the tv, I guess you needed something to distract you this time, she walked in, calm as a cat, saying, “Ja and grow up you too.”, and went straight for you. You ran away that night. She called the cops and half the neighbourhood to look for you,

You were found shivering behind a park bench, begging for them not to take you back. Of course they took you back anyway, grown ups never take you seriously. When the cops brought you home, they agreed with your mom and said you were a bratty and ungrateful child. They left... your mother never let you forget that night. I’ve blocked those memories from you. I got fired that night. I didn’t know how to tell you that I’d failed you, so I secretly forced you to have a temper tantrum and order me away. When I got home to Imaginary, there was a case against me. Kid cries himself to sleep every night, gets picked on and half his childhood memories are locked away... things weren’t going well for me. I told them that it wasn’t my fault, that Fake Mom was unbeatable, you could send a thousand imaginary friends to help you and the... thing, would kill them all and bathe you in their blood, I showed them memories but they just didn’t believe me. Eventually, they just handed your case over to the anti-fairies and I’ve been trying to get you to remember me ever since.‘. ‘Why have you been doing that?’, I ask.

“When beings of darkness, spirits, enters one of you, I call it, ‘The Suck’, why you might ask? Well because it sucks, literally, it sucks you in and takes over. The suck is a dark hole that clouds the minds of all believers into attacking those higher up on the rebellion. I usually forgive my people

immediately after the suck fades but once it's on, there's no mercy, I have to protect myself. Due to the nature of the suck, with it being a dark hole and all, I'm led to believe that the suck is the spirit of God's evil sibling, known as 'The Darkness". I believe that The Darkness is seeking to reform, it was chopped into tiny pieces and thrown into the pits of hell, now it's back and looking to regain a physical form. I call The Darkness an it because it has no gender, much like God, who is referred to as a He only out of custom. The divinest of beings have no gender. If you'd have remembered me, I'd have been summoned to you and could help you destroy it, or at least chase it out of you.".

"Help me destroy it!? Why would I want to destroy it? I want to side with it if what you're saying is true. A being God is afraid of? Now there's an answer to my problems if I ever saw one. I don't believe in what most of this world believes in and follows, if there's a being out there that's fighting against the way things are now then sign me up for her side.". 'You're missing the point kid, the darkness isn't fighting to make things better, it's fighting to make things worse, chaotic.', 'Oh yeah? Worse according to who? I've felt what the suck wants from me, and I agree with it, with her. God is referred to as a male because that's what he is, a misogynistic male. The darkness fights for equality, and true righteousness. Religion is a scam and Mr All-mighty hasn't done a thing to curb the sickness that's infiltrated his followers, either he enjoys it or he doesn't have the power, just like he didn't have the power to stop himself being nailed to that cross. Died for our sins they say, died because he's as powerless now as he was then.'.

'You are your father's child.', says Bubbles in my head, as he fades from view. In walks Aurora. "Mom says you're not supposed to be talking to yourself.", she says. I was sure that

that conversation with Bubbles had been on the other side, maybe Bubbles doesn't have any magic either and it all really is in my head. "I wasn't talking to myself, I was arguing with my... You know what, never mind. Where is your mom anyway, isn't she supposed to be going to be getting ready for that braai Bibi doesn't know she's going to?". "Oh she's not going any more.", says Aurora, "Granny found out about it and shouted her.". Aurora looks at the toy dog staring at the fish bowl. Should I tell her what's in it? Who's in it?

"Rory, do you have an imaginary friend?", I ask Aurora. Her face lights up as she smiles, "I have two, they're sisters.", she says. Just to be sure they're not demons with blood dripping down their faces, I ask her, "Can you draw them for me? And I'll draw my old imaginary friend for you.". She jumps up and down, clapping her hands, "Come", she says, as she grabs my hand and leads me towards her play area. She pulls out her chalkboard and begins drawing. The first thing I notice are the bright colours Rory uses on their tails... tails you ask? Her imaginary friends are mermaids, and they don't look demonic, but they do look familiar. Oh no. "Rory, they're so cool, what's their names?", I ask. "One of their names is something like Star and the other troubles Star, I think her name is something to do with a flower.". She drew me a picture of Astra and Rose.

CHAPTER 9
CLEAN YOUR ROOM

There were so many questions running through my head. Why? How? How long? I didn't have time to ponder the answers, I'd told Aurora I'd draw her my "old" imaginary friend, so I got to work drawing Bubbles. It wasn't complicated, I drew him how I remembered him when he was young. Short and staunch, with even his limbs being made up of many round bubbles, except he didn't have a mouth, I always wondered about that, I tried drawing him bubble teeth once but he looked scary. I don't know how but somehow he told me the first time I drew him that he doesn't have a mouth. Anyway, that's how I drew him now, without a mouth. I used to fool myself when I was young and picture where his chin meets his body (I drew him without a neck when I did this), was his mouth so it didn't look so weird, and then I stopped because Bibi has a double chin and sometimes I started to picture it talking.

"He's so fat!", says Rory. "Well, he's a bubble, he's round.", I say, with a sneaky smile forming on my face, knowing Bubbles is close-by listening to us calling him fat."Where's his mouth?", she asks. "I don't know, he just never had one.", I reply. I was curious about the mermaid sisters. Why did they look and sound exactly like the two woman I'd just seen in my trip? There was one thing I was certain about though, the similarity between these figures shows that I'm not imagining all of this in my head, someone else has seen these figures and heard their names. This wasn't enough proof to prove that the other side is real though, I needed something more. I tried accessing the other side again, to purposefully look through my third eye, I kept getting blocked... but why?

Then it hit me, Rose said that she was using me to see, the nitches figured out how to do that and looked through my third

eye for information, yes, the memory is coming back to me, I asked someone I trusted to close my third eye so that no one could ever look through it again and get information they're not supposed to have, including me. That's how my memories got erased, when they closed my third eye, they locked part of my brain away, that part held some memories. I need to clean out my head of everyone who's a nitch, what's a nitch you ask? It's hard to describe... basically it's a negative itch.

Instead of this cute little thing that you don't know where it's coming from that makes you want to smile, laugh and roll over with happiness, a negative itch is something that you also don't know where it's coming from and something your body doesn't understand or know how to react to, but instead of making you happy and excited, it makes you sad and angry... it's like someone is tickling you and instead of it being fun, it's dark and wants something bad to happen. The same way you can only hold a straight face for so long until you burst out laughing, you also can't hold in a nitch for very long... I call people who cause this negative itch, a nitch. Nitches also turn out to be snitches and other things that are similar to the word nitch, and no not only the bad word, I think of them as glitches, ditches, twitches and so much more. I need to worry about my inner circle before I can focus on the random, everyday nitch.

Let's start with Aurora. She seems to be playing both sides. She snitches on me for the tiniest things, knowing that Fake Mom and Booger are just dying to have a go at me. She shows me love and friendship. She shares her snacks with me when her mother is not around. I don't know, maybe her malicious actions towards me are because Fake Mom and Booger treat her badly if she treats me with kindness, if that's the case, she's a very talented actor, but I've never trusted snitches.

Next is my grandmother, Zakiyah, we call her Zac. She's always been a bit of an odd one. I think she's an immortal, like me. She's been around for ages and refuses to die, strong as an ox she is. The reason I suspect her is because she does all the sweet grandmotherly things, gives me money, cooks my favourite meal, let me watch all the TV I wanted when I was a kid and takes my side. Problem is, she snaps, sometimes she'll throw me under the bus, or have a go at me like Fake Mom does, sometimes I wonder if it was Zac who taught Fake Mom her nasty ways, she'll clearly show that she's buying me off with the stuff she gets me, for me to be nice to her and do all the grandson-like things, like fist bumps, kisses on the forehead, keeping her in the loop and standing up for her, even though she's a possible nitch.

Then we have my cousin-in-law, Shaun, he's Chinese. When him and my cousin first started dating he was okay, pretty cool actually. We used to play an enormous amount of Xbox together. He used to walk me to school, teach me guy stuff, put me on his shoulders, take me with him to pray, let me stay over by him and drive me places. Once him and my cousin got married, he became distant, more involved in making money, he had children and I no longer had time to spend with him. He became cold, mean, unholy... or maybe he became too holy. He stopped seeing reason, he lost his compassion, he became a mindless robot for Fake Mom and the suck. We're at least talking a bit more now, but he is either being controlled or fell over to the dark side.

My actual cousin is next up on my hit list. He could be what inspired Shaun to become the man that he is. He has been distant and mean to me my whole life. My good judgement would say that he is jealous of me but my better judgement would be that he is just arrogant. Me and him had some good

times, we bonded over the bud. He’s bullied me my whole childhood but he said it was to help me grow up tough, what bothers me is that he’s hiding something.

Lastly, one of my 3 aunts. I group them together because they all have the same modus operandi. They are all supportive in times of need, they all seem to have a sixth sense as to when I’m in danger, they all want me to socialise with their children, my cousins, they all give me money when they have enough of it to spare but they all stand by idly as my Fake Mom unleashes her torrents of abuse at me and locks me in nut houses for stupid things like putting sour milk in my tea, but like I said, those trips were missions and I don’t regret the people I helped. Great, Astra’s using the time booth. No babe, you can’t erase Rose from existence, put her back. Astra and Rose have been fighting recently. Rose says she was there for me when I needed someone, Astra says she was there for me even when I didn’t need anyone. I can’t choose..., and there’s a third nail in the coffin involved, my ex, Natalia.

CHAPTER 10
LONG TIME NO SEE

Hi, Natalia here. Chili... I mean Adonis, I mean... Anubis, whatever name he chooses to go by these days, he even went by Tyler once upon a time, point is, he's being too modest, he doesn't show his true self. Sheesh this writing thing is harder than I thought, I don't know how this guy got through it all, and no, Chili, I'm not giving your brain back till I've had my say. To those of you who think that this is a joke, it's not. I'm possessing Anubis and I'm going to tell his story the way it's meant to be told. He's a medium and can let things communicate through him, yes, Aurora, like The Lorax, speaking for the trees for the trees have no tongue and whatnot,

I'm jacking the booth and thanks to my dear friend leaving the door open by inviting anyone in through the time chamber, I can use his body. I can hear his mumbles in the background as he's trying to get back control of his body, so cute, but so futile. Here's what I know about Anubis, Egyptian god of the dead, brother to Bastet, Egyptian queen of cats. You know that voice in the back of your mind guiding you when the nitch takes over? Those helpful thoughts you never share with your friends? That person who smiles as he walks by while you're talking about whatever happened on the current most popular show? (Sorry to those of you who haven't seen him in person, he really does have Nuur on his face.).

Chili has something called soul gazing, he can see energy, one day he was staring at a picture of a crush, and started seeing her chakras, when it happened, he opened her third eye just by looking at her! He couldn't believe it, he'd been alone for so long on the other side and now suddenly there was someone to talk to. He tried it again on a close friend and boom, it happened again, but when he tried to contact them later on

through those same pictures, their third eye had closed again. Let me paint a picture for you. The world is under mind control, you're the only non-zombie aside from a few half mutants, the zombies are attacking you and there's no one to turn to. That's what life is like for this guy, the only one around who can hear, see and speak. When he walks past a zombie, they wake up and attack him, so Chili is giving all of us the cure, he's trying to make us all aware, open everyone's third eye! Now he feels bad for doing it, I can hear him now in the back of his mind where I locked him, don't worry I'll give your award-winning author back after I've had my say. I hear him repeating one of his favourite quotes, "A drowning man will grab onto anything floating nearby to keep breathing, even another person. Now I aint saying it's right, but the man's drowning.".

You see, he believes that we were happier, living in our ignorance. That we were happy, not knowing about superpowers. That we were happy, being slaves to the matrix! He did it at great risk, for those who knew the secrets of the third eye before the grand awakening (Yes Chili, that's what we're calling it), knew that it was extremely dangerous opening even one person's third eye, and now he woke up several dimensions' third eyes all at once! I don't know about you but I prefer being awake, even if it's harder and more painful, at least it's real.

Can I tell you about my history with Chili? I'm going to, and then I'll let the other two of the love quadrilateral have their say, which means hang in there dude, you're gonna be possessed for quite a while, might as well let him go out for a smoke. The first time I met Chili.... It was grade 7, he was new at our school, just transferred in from some rich, posh school. He wasn't at all what I expected. He wasn't rude or snobbish,

he didn’t even look rich, he was just... cool. Like from the first sight of him, keeping his composure in the midst of all these strangers, looking as though he was born for this, making new friends, warding off enemies, impressing the girls, he just oozed awesomeness.

The teacher introduced him and asked him to greet the class, many of us snickered at this, but when he spoke, sweet Jesus, it was like my brain fell asleep and my heart melted, I’ll never forget my first impression of him, it was love at first sight, and there was something else... something that said I’d never be able to have him, not all to myself at least. He carried with him this darkness and sense of danger that no one could quite put their finger on. It was probably him seeing into the future and knowing the trials he’d have after school, or maybe it was what was going on at that moment with Fake Mom and Booger, maybe he was just born with sadness. Then came him breaking out of his shell. He was funny, charismatic, humble and beyond all, super freaking smart, he still thinks he’s a loser but really, he’s a greaser with the body of a jock and the brain of a nerd. He knew the question before the teacher even asked it.

It pains me to admit it but I was not his first love interest. Of course he had higher standards. He was all goo goo gaa gaa over Little Miss Popular who we hate to admit but was clearly a perfect match for him. He never asked her out, she never showed any interest in him and one thing became very clear very quickly, he was not a fan of rejection. He was picked on a lot, but he fought back and soon became a hard target. He stood up for losers when they got bullied. He was the kind of smarty pants who didn’t let you copy his homework but rather taught you how to do it. He was a beast on the soccer field, but jealousy led to him being picked last most of the time, which didn’t last long once he stopped playing once he figured they

were trying to embarrass him. They begged him to play soccer again, I was there and heard the whole thing, he told them "tsek" and got back to his game of Yu-Gi-Oh. They stopped playing sports on the field for the rest of the year after that. His friends and him were the only ones good at sport and it was humiliating watching the others fumble after the ball on the field without their star players, sometimes I wonder if that was his plan all along. You didn't mess with Chili.

He soon became prefect and kept the peace and justice in school. One of his best friends became Head Boy but we all knew who really ran things, if only he could've seen it as well. So how did I get to snuggle up with the infamous home boy? We got put on a project together. When they called our names out together, it felt like lightning shot through the classroom. All the girls turned to look at me and all the boys wolf whistled at Chili. After class, he approached me for the first time since he arrived at our school. "Hi, I'm Chili.", he said. "I know.", I whispered, I seemed to have forgotten how to speak out loud, bloody hell, were all my conversations with him in my head?

I seemed to 45 know so much about him and yet we've never spoke a word. He still doesn't see it as a date, but I felt something connect in us after that project. How about I tell you some stuff about what happened and you guys can figure out whether we "dated" or not. Let's carry on with our first conversation. "So, what topic should we choose?", he asks, the project was about saving the environment. We could, invent a natural resource-driven energy supply, debate about whether using natural resources was an exploitation of the environment with facts to back up your debate and make a poster, and lastly, make something useful out of non-recyclable materials, even if you just make a piece of art. "What a gentleman, letting the lady go first.", I say with more confidence and charisma than I

actually have.

“I’m not picky, you’re the smart one, you choose.”, I say. “You’re pretty artsy, wanna do the third option?”, he asks. “Sir will think we’re being lazy if we choose the art one. Feeling up for a debate?”, I ask. “No, I don’t like debates.”, he says. Of course he doesn’t like debates, he’s such a chill, peaceful person. Don’t get me wrong, he’s a force to be reckoned with if you mess with him, but this must mean that he doesn’t like violence. “So we’re inventing?”, I ask. “Looks like,”, he replies, “How about we meet up at my house this weekend to brainstorm?”. “My dad doesn’t allow me over at boys’ houses.”, I say shyly, ‘Gosh it’s embarrassing to admit’, think. ‘It’s okay, no need to feel bad.’, I hear a voice in my head say, the same voice that pops up whenever I think of Chili, it’s weird, it’s like the voice has a mind of it’s own, like it’s not connected to my actual thoughts. “Not to hit on you or anything, but I think we should get each other’s numbers.”, he says. My heart jumps. OMG, I’m gonna get his number! He must have read my face, because he noticed that something was off. “It’s cool if you don’t want to.”, he says. “No! I mean... it’s not that, I just thought that we’d never have to exchange numbers.”, I say.

The smile slightly fades from his face, but he keeps it together, now that I’m in his mind, I see that he thought I was in a league above his own and that I didn’t want a loser having my number. No dude! It’s the other way around, I thought that you were too good for me. He pulls out his Blackberry, unlocks it and hands it to me to put in my number. I resist the urge to look at how many messages he has. Should I put something flirtatious in my name? Like a heart or something? No Natalia, don’t do it, you’ll look weird. I can’t resist. I save my contact as ‘Lia’, figuring it’s a good compromise. “I don’t have my

phone on me.”, I say as I hand the phone back to him, he locks it without even looking at it, so much for my big move, “Can I just take yours down on a piece of paper or something?”, I ask. “I don’t have paper.”, he says, “How about I write it down on your hand?”, he asks. Is he hitting on me? “Sure.”, I say, hesitantly. He pulls out a pen. This is it Natalia, be cool. I hand him my hand. His skin is... different... He’s clearly done a lot with these hands, they’re rough, but not ugly rough, they’re like, naturally rough. He holds my hand firmly in his as he begins writing down his name and number on my palm, clearly holding back a smile. Perhaps I have a shot after all.

CHAPTER 11
THE DATE
It's early Saturday morning when I get the call. I'm still sleeping and my phone starts ringing, it's an unknown number, I completely forgot that Adonis has my number now. "Hello?", I answered in my groggy, morning voice. "Morning sunshine.", says a mocking voice over the phone, "I take it you didn't save my number, hope you didn't wash your hands.". My heart stops as I realise who it is. "Even if I did, I have you down in my call log now anyway.", I smirk, secretly suppressing the fact that I now have evidence of a call with the great and powerful, Chili. "Just woke up?", he asks. "Yeah, I overslept.", I lie, knowing that this is way earlier than my usual Saturday morning. "Is it cool if I come over today?", he asks over the phone. "Yes, I'll tell my dad that you'll be coming over around lunchtime, is that okay with you?", "It's perfect.", he says, "See you then, I've got some great ideas.", he says as he cuts the call.

All business I see. I can't waste any time, I need to get ready for him. I slowly crawl out of bed and put on my slippers and gown. I look at myself in the mirror, at least today isn't a bad hair day and the bags under my eyes are barely noticeable, still gonna have to cover it up with make up though. After breakfast, I start tackling the task of choosing an outfit. I make my way upstairs. Halfway up the flight of stairs, I meet my older brother. "That boy still coming over?", he asks. "Looks like it.", I say, "Please be cool when he gets here, nothing embarrassing.". "Cross my heart.", he says, "No promises for mom though, I saw her pulling out the baby 48 pictures this morning.", my brother says as a sneaky smile crosses his face. "She wouldn't dare!", I exclaim. "Chillax, I'm pulling your leg. Mom and dad seem to be in a good mood today, I don't think there'll be any trouble.", he says. "Thanks.", I say and

continue my way up the stairs. Once in my room, I close the door, I need to tidy up, what if he wants to do work in my room?

I get to work immediately, mainly I just shoved stuff into the cupboards. Now for my make up. I've never been so shaky in all my life, I nearly poked my eye out as I put on my eye-liner, but I was satisfied with the results. Now to choose an outfit, it has to be perfect. Crap, I don't even know what style he's into. I take a chance and choose a saggy shirt that covers only one shoulder, that's hot right? I already decided no dress so I'm wondering if I shouldn't wear a skirt because it falls under the dress category, but then again, I don't want to waste the chance to show off some skin, I decide on torn jeans and sneakers. I look like your typical hipster chick. The wait drives me crazy, I decide to distract myself with friends. I take out my phone and check my messages. No messages from him... damn. One of my girl friends sent me a good morning message, why is everyone up so early today? Does everyone wake up at this time and I'm the only one who sleeps in?

I reply to my friend, I tell her that Chili is coming over today. "OMG, you are so lucky.", she says. I tell her it's just for school, she doesn't believe me. "Okay, I confess, I have the butterflies, but I'm going to keep my composure and not embarrass myself.". We talk for a while about things that might happen, what would happen if he hits on me and we even as far as to what I'll do if he wanted to kiss me, I confess, my face went red. 49 The doorbell rang. I tried not to faint as I made my way down the stairs. Easy does it, I told myself. I opened the front door and walked down the pathway to the front gate. My world spun as I unlocked the gate, keep it cool Nat, I told myself. I took a breath of fresh air and opened the front gate.

There he stood, tall and masculine, with his hands in the pockets of his black jeans, his skull shirt and red All-Stars. “Sup Tia.”, he said, and he smiled. I could feel my face going red. “Hey Chili.”, I said, “Come in”. Halfway up the pathway, he spoke, “You excited?”, he asked. “For school work on the weekend, oh yeah, I’m overjoyed.”, I joked, once again, having more confidence and humour than usual, is this what those love songs, romance movies and novels were talking about about when they said, “I’m a better person when I’m with him.”?

We reach the front door, I usher him inside. He asks to greet the family, I take him to the kitchen where my mom is cooking, “Ah you must be Chili. I hope you like seafood.”, mom says. “I love it.”, he says. “Well, don’t be shy, make yourself at home, lunch will be ready soon.”. Chili thanks my mom and I take him to the lounge where my dad and brother are watching rugby. “Hello, Sir.”, says Chili. My dad looks up, startled that someone wearing a skull shirt could be so polite, “Hello, young man. It’s nice to finally meet you.”, “The pleasure is all mine, Sir.”. “Please, call me Bob.”, says dad, “You two have fun now, but not too much fun.”, dad warns. “Wouldn’t dream of it William.”, says Chili, we make our way up the stairs to my room. “So,” he says, “wanna go first?”, “My ideas aren’t really that great.”, I say only because I have no ideas, “You go for it.”. The rest of the moment was a blur.

We talked a bit, went down for a pleasant lunch, went back up to my room and continued our discussion. I soon realised that not only was Chili smart, he was creative too. In the end, we decided on a mixed generator, one that used the combined efforts of a solar panel, a wind turbine and a water system that flows non-stop that’s self-regenerating and lastly, magnets that create current thanks to their magnetic flux. He calls it, The Elemenergy, since it used the power of the four elements to

generate electricity. I'll admit, I didn't follow everything he was saying but just listening to him speak made me feel calm and safe, yet excited and dangerous. It's hard to describe what his presence is like. Oh gosh, did he catch me staring at him again. I decided to be bold and give him a flirtatious look followed by a touch on the arm. When he cracked his next joke, I made my move, it worked for a second, but he looked down, as though some unbidden thought came to mind. We sat in silence for a while. I just know that he got the butterflies, I could see it by his body movement, but he killed them almost as soon as they appeared. "What's wrong?", I asked.

"I don't let myself get attached very easily. Don't take this the wrong way, I really wish things were different, but I can't invest any more feelings in this.", he says. I lean in and kiss him. "It's okay to be vulnerable around me.", I whisper. He kisses me back, "No it's not.", he says. We sit there kissing for a while. "I have to go.", he says, I walk him down the stairs, he says goodbye to my family and hugs me goodbye, "We'll finish the project in school. I'll buy all the materials and we can put it together together.", he says. He walks out the front gate, with neither of us ever to mention the kiss again.

CHAPTER 12
PETAL
Thanks for jacking my man Astra. He was perfectly happy with me being the only girl in his life. Oh and I'm not counting that one kiss, it's Rose speaking by the way, yeah, I figured out how to use the time chamber to possess Adonis. I call him Adonis because he got that name while he was with me, when he became The Greek god of Peace, son of Aphrodite. How did he get that name? Well, once he figured out he could speak to spirits with the power of his third eye, he reached out to the Greek gods, they answered him immediately, hinting that he was also a god and that they knew each other already, on the astral plane that is. They spoke for months, working together and making the world a better place. One day, he heard that there was such a thing as demigods, he asked the Olympian Council if he was a demigod, they told him that he was an actual god, he just didn't have a domain, at least among the Greeks. Zeus asked him what he would like to be god of, and that he should choose wisely because he only gets to pick once, "So make it a good one.". "Well.", he starts, "I go around, resolving conflict, bringing fairness, is the god of Peace taken?".

It wasn't, and since that day he was known as The god of Peace, there remained a major problem, however. Now that he believed in the Greek gods, he could no longer be a Muslim, and therefore could no longer keep the name Mohammed. With a sore heart, he searched for a good Greek name for him. He didn't have to search far, for the name of his destiny appeared in the first page of his search results, Adonis, meaning handsome, but really he chose it because it was similar to my other name.

So where do I come into the picture? He opened my third eye

long before any of this happened, he couldn't believe it was really me, he needed proof, I provided proof and we've been lovers on the other side ever since. He showed me around his neighbourhood with astral projection, it was a rough neighbourhood, I instantly gained respect for him, how much he did so much for such a run down community. He learned that spirits were trading with valuables on the other side, he figured he could finally make some cash, since in the physical realm he was being kept inside the house all the time and wasn't allowed enough freedom to work. He started off with a video game, Freeflow, a racing game thought of to the finest detail, he got a team together and got the video game made on the other side, it was the cheapest yet most widely bought video game in other side history.

That's where it started, a simple video game. He now runs Adonis co., an other side business specialising in everything from sleeping droughts called Nightlock, to weapons like swords and shields called Dragon Claws and Dragon Scales. Now you might think that this sounds silly, but those who can be affected by spiritual products don't. It's the bread and butter of the other side, especially for those who live fully on the other side. Adonis co,'s dream is to make other side currency trade-able, as physical money is being used by the governments and upper classes to control the people. He calls his currency, space creds, you know, like in that movie. He needs alien technology, specifically, the neuro-link, to be able to read how much valuables you have on the other side and for it to give a physical representation of how much cash you have on the other side, then we can do away with matrix money.

Adonis co. is very profitable and it's tipping the scales of justice. I took our relationship very seriously. I broke up with my boyfriend and surrounded myself with people he'd have

approved of. Until this day, he's still trying to figure out what time zone I'm in so that he can wish me good night and greet me with good morning, it's so cute watching him squirm.

Nevertheless, I owe you guys a story. I agree with Natalia about one thing, this dude's praises need to be sung to the heavens, he's too humble. I hope that one day you get to meet him, the real him, the him he is when he's used to you and feels comfortable enough to be himself around you, it took him 3 months to open up to me. We take long distance relationship to the next level. There's a time when he was so heartbroken he referred to me as "one of the voices", it took a while but we finally realised that we're gonna be a part of each others' lives forever. We even get put on missions together. Our first mission? It was so long ago but I feel like it wasn't. We had to make people believe in the other side.

There's been an influx of artists ever since, mainly rappers, giving hints about what goes on in the spirit realm and things we see and understand with our third eye. If you listen with your heart, you'll hear that they're talking about more than just weed, babes and money, that those things are just a cover for the truth. So how did we do it? By paying them off of course, with space creds and Adonis co. products. We figured it wasn't cheating since the mission was to make people believe in the other side and what better way to do that than to prove that things can change in the physical realm by using something from the spirit realm. Yes Bubbles, I know it's confusing, they can read this chapter as many times as they want until they get it, or did you forget you're about to be famous in a book?

As for me, I'm already famous, at least in your world. In my world, I used to go to a school for the... you know what what it's for is not important. There was this voice in my head, a

voice that wasn't quite my own, a voice that had the answers or comfort I needed at the time. At times, it felt like I was living the same day over and over, but I didn't mind, it meant I got to listen to the voice over and over again. Then one day, the voice told me it was like the God of my dimension. Dimension? No way that's a thing. He peaked my interest though. God of my world? How? What happened to the real God?

I created a fake situation the next day, a situation I knew he'd respond to, I started flirting with a boy I knew he hated, Jack, what happened next, I didn't expect. His voice went silent. I tried talking to him, telling him I made the whole thing up. I take it he didn't believe me, I see now, he wanted me to be with someone I could be with physically, and not just a voice in my head, if only I'd have believed that he had such deep feelings for me before I fake flirted, how was I going to get out of this one.... I decided to go big or go home.

I invited Jack over to my house, wearing my most flirtatious clothes, he had to have been watching. Jake came over and we started playing a game together, still silence from him, I was going to have to up my game, I looked straight into Jack's eyes, and leaned in for a kiss. "STOP!", I heard a voice say in my head, I pulled away from Jack and told him I made a bad judgement call and sent him home. I spoke with the voice in my head, 'Oh so now you know me.', I said angrily, 'Where have you been this whole time? I had to do everything on my own with no one to help, no one to guide me, I nearly kissed... you know what, never mind!'.

'Do you love him?', Adonis' voice sounded in my head. 'Of course not! I just wanted to get your attention, I never meant for things to go this far... is that why you stayed away? You thought I loved him?', I asked. 'I thought you were happy with

him, I can't explain it, I've only watched you from afar but I can't help obsessing over you.'. 'How are you watching me anyway?' I asked him. 'Your world is a TV show on my Earth, I can communicate with people through a screen, I can hear their thoughts, I can alter events, I can do lots of things with just... telepathy I guess. So you're not into Jack?', he asked. 'Heavens no. So no more disappearing?'. "No more disappearing.", his voice sounded in my head, clear as day. He stayed with me through the rest of high school. We learned how to communicate without needing the screen. We bonded, we fell in love, we spent time together. My friends thought I was crazy for holding on to an imaginary man, but we just... fitted together.

Then I learned something that would set me back for life, my mystery man was immortal, and once the show stopped airing in his world, I began to age rapidly. I soon grew gray and hadn't heard his voice since I was a teenager. I soon passed on. I woke up under a tree, young and vibrant, with my mystery man right beside me,"Is this real?", I asked him. He told me that he was Anubis and could give me any afterlife I wanted. I asked him to reincarnate me in his world. The smile left his face. "That's one of the very few things I can't do.", he said. He said the best he could do is show me my fame in his world, I really was on the list of of celebrities, even though it was my actor who got all the fame, wow she looks just like me. I agreed under the condition that I could speak to him whenever I thought of him. He agreed. I'm sure he didn't mean to break his promise, he just didn't know that other people couldn't start other side encounters like he could. It's like he was free Wi-Fi. Now, here I sit, in my bedroom in the sky, with all the space creds I could want, waiting for the love of my life to pass on as well and join me. In the meantime, my actor keeps up the ruse of living amongst his people, when really, no one in His world

even met me.

CHAPTER 13
ASTRA
Okay, no more jacking my book or my brain, I'm back and you guys gotta stop possessing me, it's freaky. Did I know or remember everything that Taal and Rose wrote down, I confess, no I did not, but that does not mean I don't care about our history, you see, my mind was reset by a not-so-secret secret organisation I'm no longer allowed to mention. Nevertheless, everything said by my brain-jackers is true, even if I don't remember all of it, it feels right, like it fits.

Do I agree with all the hero worship and girls castrating themselves before me, no I do not, although I did choose a name that means handsome so maybe I'm a little self-conscious? Yes, Rose and I have been together for years on the other side whilst Tash and I shared a real kiss and now comes the complication of me being already married to Astra, oh yeah, that wasn't a memory, it was her seeing who my other half is... Still, I've got a thing for her, you thought she was going to write this chapter huh? I guess I owe her a chapter. Being with her just feels natural, there's no messy feelings, no toxicity and everything just flows freely when I'm with her, by the way, if you have control of your third eye you can buy and play the game that built my empire, Freeflow... actually you know what, I'll attach a free copy with this book. "Hey.", I say.

"You never were one for small talk, I wonder what changed you.", she says. "Probably the many vows of silence I took as I was thrown into institutions as my friends stood by and laughed.", I replied. "I'm one of those friends you know, watching you from above. We were laughing at them, not you.", she says, "We've told you, those were missions to bring justice to those who've escaped it and abused the system.". "Sure felt like I was a hero.", I say sarcastically. 'You weren't

supposed to feel good about it, besides, it would've blown your cover.', she says. "What do you mean besides? There was a reason other than it being cover?", I ask. "Oh Anubis, surely you must know that so much pain wasn't for something as trivial as cover.", she says. 'What was it for then?', I ask. "Well, what do you think it was for?", she asks. 'I don't know, maybe I did something horrible in a past life and I'm paying for it....", I say.

I can hear her laughing in the background, "You? Do something so awful that we have to reincarnate you into hell? No my love, you were sent as a blessing to these beings of flesh, I can see you're struggling, I'll put you out of your misery and tell you what you went through all of that for. You did it for love, you did it for me, you did it for family. Our race was wiped from existence, all the superior beings of light, completely obliterated, by the beings of flesh you refer to as nitches, very apt name for them by the way, almost as though deep down, you knew. You see, nature always has a loophole, in this case, to regenerate our race, you and the other last survivors needed to donate your positive energy to the fallen, without the nitches knowing what you're doing. You and your warriors are strong, very strong.

What you feel as depression and a longing for family and a home, is actually regenerating your family and a place to call home. We might not have been able to control every drop of pain you felt, but we were able to make sure that not a drop of blood was wasted, and the hospital took allot of blood from you over the course of your missions, did you know that the corona virus vaccine is based on your blood? So my hero, do you still feel as though you're being punished?", she asks. "Yes.", I reply, "I do believe you, but I've seen enough to know the way that the world works, everything is wrong,

rigged and broken, nothing is ever going to change, help an old lady across the road today only to have her favourite grandchild die from drugs tomorrow.". "Ever the optimist.", Astra jokes, "What happened to you Anubis? You were always dark and mysterious but you were never this... sad. Something broke inside of you, something big, but not something irreversible. I'll bring you back, one way or the other.".

What's that supposed to mean? "Astra, what are you planning?", I ask. 'Desperate times call for desperate measures.', is all she says. All of a sudden I can't feel her presence. "Astra? Astra!", I call out. Silence. 'She's gone.', says Katie as she jumps onto my bed in her Bastet, kitten form. 'What was Bubbles talking about when he said that he has a solution to ease my pain, does it have something to do with my family's rebirth? The depression my soldiers and I have been feeling to raise my race?', I ask Bastet. "Sharp as ever I see.", says Bubbles as he floats out of the toy fish bowl. "It does indeed have something to do with your depression. Your family and wife have been successfully regenerated and it is safe for the information of how we did it to be known to you, the nitches can learn all about how we channelled your guys' happiness into the race they once destroyed. I wouldn't have brought you back to the fight without having something worth fighting for, the memories won't haunt you now that your family is alive. So, young warrior, I ask you again, are you ready to remember?".

"I'm ready, Bubbles.", I say. I feel a wave of energy rush over me, Bubbles tells me that it's him taking me through the portal. "So what now?", I ask. "Now we wait.", says Bubbles, "Go for a smoke, you should start seeing flashes of your old life.". I go for a smoke. Fake Mom abuses me once again while I'm out for my smoke. 60 "You know she's doing something to your

food right?", says Bubbles, "Don't you realise her growing stronger after every meal you eat? She's draining your energy with voodoo and using it to fuel her nefarious deeds, she's a kitchen witch and hag. We need to speak to Longtail to see if we can do anything about that.". "Already done.", I say. 'She says she'll think of something once she's shifted and goes out running tonight, she thinks better in wolf form. Hey Bubbles, that reminds me, what am I?". "You're a Je' la hi, a God.", says Bubbles.

CHAPTER 14
THE END?

“You know, if you guys didn’t just convince me that there’s a whole race of beings just like God, I wouldn’t have believed you, but it all makes sense. My power, my knowledge, the way people feel about me. There was a time that I thought that I was Jesus, and then Lucifer, and then the prophet Mohammed.”, I say. “*cough* *cough*”, jokes Bubbles, “You’re right about one of those *cough*.”. ‘There’s no way.’, I protest. ‘You really don’t remember do you? Well that’s what I’m here for.’, Bubbles says as he puts his hand on my forehead. ‘Remember’, I hear his voice sounding in my head. All of a sudden, I’m in a cave, I’m wearing rags and crying, hiding from Fake Mom. This cave looks extremely familiar, is it the same cave I envisioned when Rose asked me to envision a cave? It is! Yet, I remember for another reason, it’s because this memory, my crying, it’s happened and I’ve been here before. I’m a ghost, watching the younger me as though through a screen.

I’m standing right in front of me and yet, younger me shows no sign of knowing that I’m there. ‘It’s a memory, you’re here to watch, not interact.’, says Bubbles as he appears next to me. “Thank the heavens you’re here,”, I say, “I thought I was going to be alone in this dark cave.”. “That’s what younger you thought as well.”, says Bubbles, “Yet... oh, here he comes, our surprise visitor.”.

A light appears behind younger me. Crying me doesn’t notice it. A hand appears out of the light and puts itself on my shoulder. ‘Cry your cry young one, for one day your pain will be at an end.’, says the archangel Gabriel. I don’t stop crying, but I lift my head up to see who it is. “Who are you?”, I ask, “What do you want?”. “I’m here to help. I have been instructed to help you with whatever you wish me to.”, says the angel. “I

want to die.", I say. "I cannot do that.", says Gabriel, "We need you alive. for what, I cannot say, but I cannot put an end to your suffering.". "Then I need protection, that woman keeps hurting me.", I say. "Keep one thing in mind.", says Gabriel, "Their religion unto them, and your religion unto you, we'll see who followed the straight path in the end.". 'Why me...', I think. 'Because you're a warrior, the strongest one we have. You used to be a man named Achilles in a past life, you were matched only by the great Hercules himself.'.

"Those words, you said them and yet your mouth didn't move, and can you read my thoughts?.", I ask out loud. "Funny you should ask that, that's going to be your life's mission, freeing speech with thoughts. For spirits, it's the only way we can communicate, we speak with our 62 thoughts as not all of us can cause physical variations in the air pressure with our vocal chords, which is what produces sound. No, our communication is more spiritual than that.", says the archangel. 'So, you can hear what I'm thinking right now?', I ask, "Clear as day.", says Gabriel. "That's enough.", says Bubbles, let's go back, and he transports me back to my bed where I'm writing this book. "Bubbles... I'm a prophet?", I ask.

"The last prophet had already been sent thousands of years ago. What you are is a seer, the most powerful seer who's ever lived. Your power rivals even that of the prophets, who were being given prophecies by God, similar to when you were Achilles, fighting against the gods' chosen champions, like Hercules." 'I mean you've gotten yourself a black cat.', says Katie with her thoughts, back in her feline form. "You were listening?" I ask Katie. "Yeah, and watching.", says my cat as she enters the second world and starts turning into her half-human form, "Through all your lives Anubis, you've always went against society's norms, you've always tried to change

things and gotten labelled as a rebel for it.”. “So, I’m to blame for my misery?”, I ask. ‘No.’ says Bubbles, as he gives me one of his warm, squishy hugs, ‘Don’t ever think like that, okay?’.

“That’s all I think about! That’s all I’m told!”, I scream at Bubbles, “All that passes through my mind is how I’m a failure, an addict, someone with a mental defect! All I’m told is how I make no money, I give no love, I deserve no love and that everyone else is better than me! So tell me Bubbles, how am I not supposed to think that this is all my fault!?”. My third eye opens. Bubbles is hugging me, how long has he been hugging me? I hug back. I’m not looking through my own eyes, I’m watching myself from outside my body, even though it’s just my astral body. Can a third eye fly around? Is that why we enjoy movies so much, because it’s how we view our lives through our third eye? Stupid ADHD, can’t even focus on a simple hug. “It’s not your fault.”, says Bubbles, still hugging me.

“It’s time to be strong, my king. Astra has said you may return to your throne whenever you feel ready, but we both know you won’t leave until your job is done.”. I feel a lump in my throat, ‘Don’t cry now!’, I think to myself. I suddenly realise I’m going to be stuck in this life forever, thanks to my selfless wish. I start crying. I sit there, on my bed, crying, while Bubbles hugs me on the other side. “Bubbles, will it ever end?”, “Soon, my king, soon.”. There is an explosion nearby. “What was that?”. I ask Bubbles. “Have you forgotten what day it is?”, asks Bubbles. Friday. There is a not so widely known but very important Muslim prophecy that the world will end on a Friday. I’ve spent many Fridays, praying, begging and pleading, ‘Let the end be today, I’m tired of suffering.’. It was a prayer that has gone on for far too long, I gave up on it about 3 years ago, yet still, sometimes I find myself praying for the

end, I figured that there was a greater chance of the world ending than the Heavens taking just one soul, putting the masses out of their misery and whatnot. Another boom, followed by gunshots. I look outside, all looks peaceful. “What the hell? Where’s the noise coming from?”, I ask Bubbles.

‘It’s a spiritual war, it’s happening in the spirit realm, I’m letting you hear it how us spirits hear it.’, says Bubbles. “There’s guns in the spirit realm?”, I ask. “That’s not the point!”, screams Bubbles, “The point is that as useless as you think ‘just speaking on the other side’ is, there’s people, beings, in the spirit realm who are physically affected by your thoughts. I mean, you’re Anubis! We chose you for the job because of your sway in the spirit realm, your duty belongs to the people, especially those who call the other side home. Together, you and your sister own the spirit realm! I can see the look on your face, I’m not talking about Booger, I’m talking about your real sibling, your twin, Daydream.

Together, you and her hold the other side.”. “Whoa, slow down there Bubbles, I have a twin and her name is Daydream? I’ve heard of Fairytale Land and how it’s inhabitants are named after the thing they represent, but for Daydream to be my blood? How come I haven’t heard from her before?”. ‘Because she is dead, lost in The Land of the Dead, we’ve been looking for her for years. Together, you and her control the other side. She controls what people think about when they’re awake, you control what people think about when they die, you practically control the dead. Together, you guys control what people dream about when they sleep.

I came to ask for your help, we believe we can win this war, we can sense her in the super-conscious sometimes but without her astral projection in the metaphysical, subconscious world, we

cant fight and we need her astral projection to locate his physical being in The Land of the Living. You're not gonna like what comes next.". "Why, what comes next?", I ask. Bubbles looks at his toes as he speaks, "The fact that you can't save her.". "Now wait a minute! If I rule The Land of the Dead then surely I'm able to find her and bring her back to life, why can't I help? I want to help my twin sister!". "You can't help because your astral projection is itself dead... or captured... All we know is when you were a kid, you went on an astral mission and didn't come back. We've been looking for you ever since but by now, after all this time, most of us have assumed your astral form dried out and died, there's no way an astral form can survive for so long without returning to it's host body... unless it's being fed by something other than a home cooked meal, if someone is keeping your astral form alive, they're feeding you just enough so that it doesn't die and return to it's physical body to regenerate, they've gotten it locked up and hid really well.". "Bubbles, where did I go and what was the mission?".

"You know it doesn't work like that, you can't just ask anything you want and expect me to answer just like that.", says Bubbles. "Sounds to me like you're hiding something, getting all defensive and angry.", I say, 'Let's take a peek inside your mind and find out what you're hiding.', I say with my thoughts. I project myself into Bubbles' mind. All of a sudden, I'm in a cave, I'm wearing rags and crying, hiding from Fake Mom. This cave looks extremely familiar, is it the same cave I envisioned when Rose asked me to envision a cave? It is! Yet, I remember for another reason, it's because this memory, my crying, it's happened and I've been here before.

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it. A hand appears out of the light and puts itself on my shoulder. ‘Cry your cry young one, for one day your pain will be at an end.’, says the archangel Gabriel. I don’t stop crying, but I lift my head up to see who it is. “Who are you?”, I ask, “What do you want?”. “I’m here to help. I have been instructed to help you with whatever you wish me to.”, says the angel. “I want to die.”, I say. “I cannot do that.”, says Gabriel, “We need you alive. for what, I cannot say, but I cannot put an end to your suffering.”. “Then I need protection, that woman keeps hurting me.”, I say. “Keep one thing in mind.”, says Gabriel, “Their religion unto them, and your religion unto you, we’ll see who followed the straight path in the end.”. ‘Why me...’, I think. ‘Because you’re a warrior, the strongest one we have. You used to be a man named Achilles in a past life, you were matched only by the great Hercules himself.’.

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This time, instead of Bubbles pulling me out, the vision plays through.